

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-7 (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering ~~an amount of~~ a protease-related protein in an amount effective to result in negative regulation of keratinization of hair, wherein said protease-related protein has protease activity, has homology to the kallikrein family, and is encoded by a ~~nucleotide sequence~~ nucleic acid hybridizing with the complement of the nucleotide sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1]2 ~~at 20 °C below the DNA melting.~~

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said protease-related protein is administered in the form of a nucleic acid expressing it.

Claims 10-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9 or 18, wherein said nucleic acid expressing said protein comprises:

- (a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1; or
- (b) a nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; [[or]]
- ~~(c) the complement of (a) or (b).~~

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9 or 18, wherein said nucleic acid expressing said protein comprises an expression plasmid comprising:

- (a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1; or
- (b) a nucleic acid encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; [[or]]
- ~~(c) the complement of (a) or (b).~~

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 8, comprising administering a polynucleotide encoding said protease-related protein and expressing a therapeutically effective amount of the same protease-related protein.

19. (Withdrawn) A composition for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair comprising a protease-related protein and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein said protease-related protein is encoded by a nucleotide sequence hybridizing with the complement of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 at 20 °C below the DNA melting.

20. (Withdrawn) The composition of Claim 19, wherein said protease-related protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

21. (Previously Presented) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair comprising administering an amount of a protease-related protein effective to result in negative regulation of keratinization of hair, wherein said protease-related protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

22. (Withdrawn) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of Claim 19.

23. (Withdrawn) A method for the negative regulation of the keratinization of hair, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of Claim 20.